mechanism at the Directorate General of Foreign Trade to unlock Government revenues stuck in the midst of litigations;

(b) if so, the amount locked in litigations and since when; and

(c) the percentage of recovery of such amount during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is estimated that the total amount locked in the litigations is around Rs. 142.43 crores and spread over the period from1986 onwards.

(c) The percentage of recovery of the said amount for the last three years is 0.0037%.

Basic minimum infrastructure in schools

*389. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the existing school system is deeply flawed in its inability to secure safety of the school going children;

(b) by when the country would get rid of crowded classrooms with inflammable roofing, poor access, no exits, primitive kitchen facilities and at times without drinking water or toilet facilities in the schools; and

(c) the steps proposed to ensure the basic minimum infrastructure in order to prevent deaths of students?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Human Resource Development is deeply concerned about the status of infrastructure facilities and safety of the school children. The tragedy involving the death of 94 children at an Aided Private School at Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu has highlighted the need for effective fire protection.

A preliminary assessment was carried out for Central Government Schools to find out the status of fire protection equipment and measures. Many of the Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) were found wanting in fire protection equipment; Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs), however, enjoyed better infrastructure facilities including fire protection equipment.

Detailed instructions have now been issued for providing adequate fire safety measures in all Central Government Schools within three months. KVs and JNVs running in temporary buildings have been specially targeted; school-wise survey will be conducted there, estimates made for additional facilities and adequate health and safety measures provided within three months The campaign will be monitored on weekly basis.

Further, as most of the primary and secondary schools are in the State Sector, the Minister of Human Resource Development has written to all the Chief Ministers and Union Territory Administrators to provide 'personal leadership & direction in ensuring health and safety of school children'. Copy enclosed as Statement (*See* below)

Sixteenth July every year has been suggested for observing as "School Health and Safety Day" in all the schools when safety drills and other activities will be organised for inculcating appropriate health and safety culture among teachers and students.

Statement

Copy of letter from Minister of Human Resource Development to Chief Ministers of States

D.O.No.6-14/2004-EE.5(MDM)

मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री
भारत

अर्जुन सिंह
ARJUN SINGH

नई दिल्ली–110 001

MINISTER OF
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
INDIA
NEW DELHI-110 001

27 JULY 2004

Dear,

The Kumbakonam tragedy of 16th July, has shaken the conscience of the nation.

2. Realisation of our goal of universal elementary education would remain a distant dream if we cannot ensure safety and well-being of the children in our schools. It is incumbent on us to make a national resolve to ensure health and safety of our school children so that such a tragedy

is never allowed to be repeated. Needless to say, while adequate arrangements in this behalf are needed in all educational institutions, special care needs to be taken with regard to elementary schools where children are generally too young to properly look after themselves

3. While health and safety of school-children require steps across a wide spectrum of areas, three areas, *viz.* Teacher orientation, School buildings and Mid-day Meals require special attention. Some of the major points requiring action in these areas are.

Teachers:

All teachers need to be sensitised to their responsibility for the safety and well-being of their students during school hours, and curricular/ co-curricular activities. They also need to be equipped with adequate knowledge and wherewithal to protect their students in the events of emergencies.

School Buildings:

(i) They should be free from inflammable and toxic materials. If storage of some inflammable material (e.g. fuel for cooking mid-day meal) is inevitable, they should be stored safely.

(ii) The schools should have adequate emergency exits.

(iii) There should be adequate supply of water and sand for fire fighting purposes.

(iv) School should have adequate supply of potable drinking water with appropriate chlorination whenever necessary.

Mid-day Meal:

(i) Storage of food grains, and cooking and serving of meals should be done with strict regard to hygiene.

(ii) Cooked meal should be tested by adults sufficiently prior to being served to children so that contamination, if any, is detected in time.

4. Above aspects would be adequately and regularly taken care of, only if there is a clear directive from the highest level in State Government followed up by regular monitoring which would translate into regular

inspections and corrective steps at the field level. Wherever making arrangments of the above kind involve some expenditure, they can, in most cases, be met from the funds available under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for Civil Works and annual recurring school grants.

5. I would be most grateful if you could provide personal leadership and direction in ensuring health and safety of school-children in your State. It would also be a good idea to observe 16th July, every year, as "School Health and Safety Day" and to organise safety drills and various other activities on that day to inculcate appropriate health and safety culture among teachers and students.

6. We would appreciate being apprised of the action taken in your State in the light of this letter

Yours sincerely

Sd/-

(Arjun Singh)

The Chief Ministers of all States
Chief Ministers of UTs of Delhi and Pondicherry

Impact of Flood Development Schemes in NER

*390. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some of the major on-going development schemes in North Eastern Region have been badly affected by recent floods in the region,

(b) if so, the details thereof and the extent of cost escalation due to floods; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to implement the schemes as per the schedule?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) to (c) The information in being collected.